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ABSTRACT

This document attempts to lay the groundwork for modeling and measuring the "wider benefits" of learning. The introduction distinguishes between two categories of "wider benefits" of learning. The first category is noneconomic benefits (benefits that are not measured directly in terms of additional income or increased productivity), and the second is benefits above the level of the individual (from family/household through community to the wider society). Part A examines the following topics: (1) available data sources (including longitudinal and cross-sectional survey datasets, case studies, experiments, and quasi-experiments); (2) functions of models (description, explanation, prediction, evaluation, heurism); (3) methodological issues (validity versus precision; scope; association/correlation/causality; data sources and practitioner research; pragmatism versus optimism; and "perverse" effects); and (4) literature reviews on issues and themes. Part B presents reviews discussing the literature pertaining to the following domains: health; aging; families; crime; and citizenship. Part C, which is devoted to the implications of Parts A and B for future work, considers methodological and theoretical issues and offers a framework for the research agenda. Summaries of the following projects constituting the initial research program are appended: "Learning and Social Cohesion: Civic Participation and Values"; "Managing Transitions: Learning and Adaptation among Parents with Young Children"; and "Family Learning." (Contains 254 references.) (MN)

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